Insider, Outsider or Cultures In-between. Ethical and Methodological Considerations in Intercultural Arts Research

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Introduction

In qualitative research, the "researcher is the instrument". Therefore the task of explicitly putting reflexivity to work and identifying oneself is important. In order to clarify your researcher identity and stance vis-à-vis participants, you must, as Gray (2008:936) notes, "address questions of the researcher's biographical relationship to the topic", such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, as well as acknowledging the levels of privilege and power conferred by personal history. In the field of intercultural research we, as researchers, meet with individuals and families, communities and organisations, who might have directly experienced the trauma of torture and devastations of war or challenges like migration, alienation and political or religious persecution – individuals who, because of these experiences, have been damaged and stigmatized. Racism and stigmatization can appear in relation to ethnic background, disability, social status, etc. and often turns up in contexts where there is a limitary attitude against individuals who challenge norms. These norms or expectations can create in turn an immobile position for the marked individual. When we are entering these intercultural research fields we must also challenge our self-understanding and how we interpret the degree of privilege our position carries. The interpersonal meeting can both question and confirm our conceptions of ourselves. In qualitative research, when investigating dimensions of interpersonal dialog, it becomes important to narrow the focus on perspectives of identities and abilities.

The aim of this chapter is to problematize the "insider/outsider" relation in intercultural research settings and discuss the ethical and methodological challenges, with focus on the intersubjective meeting. Practising responsible reflexivity must engage the researcher's understanding of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, voice, representation and text. With reference to reflexivity specifically, Pillow (2010) advises that 'data' should be analysed responsively and reflexively, and points out that the positioning might change from a postmodern stance or a poststructuralist stance.

This chapter also aims to critically view both the researcher's and the informant's perspectives and visualise power relations which operate in the process of data collection. This analysis is based on Bourdieu's theories about *capital* (1979, 1984).

The context of the intercultural interview

The interview brings the other into view and is perhaps the oldest of all methodologies in social science. Asking interviewees questions to gain new knowledge is and has been a common practice among anthropologists and sociologists since the start of their disciplines. In qualitative research settings, it is widely acknowledged that the researcher has power over the informants within the research relationship; bringing the other into view means adopting perspectives that reflect the viewpoints of those who are not powerful, not white, not English-speaking and not among the privileged classes (Thomsson, 2002; Kvale, 2006; Del Busso, 2007;). There is recognition of power biases, which need to be corrected in research not only in terms of whom the gatekeepers of knowledge are but also in terms of how 'objective' facts

and subjective truths are selected and which ones are excluded. From our experience, the intercultural interview creates platforms for knowledge exchange and emotional meetings, sometimes disclosure of the person being interviewed, and sometimes a therapeutic tool for telling the story of experiences that are not often told, understood or appreciated.

The interpretation of positioning in the interview setting

Through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu´s theories and tools we can visualise how power operates between different groups in society and shed light on how it might affect the data collection in an interview context. Bourdieu (1979, 1984, 1996, 2004) describes an individual's assets and resources as capital. The acquisition and mastery of different forms of capital can guarantee a diversity of power holdings depending on the type of capital, and the field in which they operate. Bourdieu describes four kinds of capital. *Economic capital* represents wealth and economic heritage. *Cultural capital* is described as capital based on background and affiliation, such as class, education and other qualifications that can be used as cultural resources. Cultural capital is, according to Bourdieu (2004), the capital valued most highly, and there is no clear economic link or market attached to this capital. The third kind of capital is *social capital*, described as resources based on family and group membership, relationships, personal contacts and networks. Social capital has a clear economic consequence. The fourth kind of capital is *symbolic capital*, which is the sum of the other types of capital when they become visible, legitimate and recognized as having a value (Broady, 1990). Because capital is not static, it is the subject of battles. Groups, classes and families develop strategies to maintain or increase capital holdings or discourage others from doing so (Söderman, Burnard, and Hofvander Trulsson, 2015). In a society, different groups have different cultural capital depending on where you come from and what groups you belong to. For groups with an immigrant background, the interpretation of cultural capital and class identification and status can sometimes become complicated.

Social mobility (Gidden, 2009), downward mobility (Bourdieu, 2004), social immobility or class remobility (Hofvander Trulsson, 2010a, 2013, 2015) are all examples of how different capitals can play out in a situation of migration. Unfortunately the most common is downward mobility. Through our research with families with immigrant background, living in exile, we have noticed among them a recurrent will to verbally position themselves, in regard to class background (economic and cultural), reasons for their situation in the new country and their aspirations (Hofvander Trulsson, 2010b; Hofvander Trulsson, 2015). We have found in many countries that most families who have their children in music education during leisure time, have a "middle class identity", or a middle to upper class aspiration. Hofvander Trulsson (2013, 2015) has shown the pivotal importance of music education to minority groups, as a tool for reconstructing cultural and social capital, in relation to the majority as well as the minority society. Thus, music, much like language, has an empowering potential in its ability to strengthen the internal social bonds within minority groups and provide its users with agency. In musical settings, cultural differences are often assets and can be used as competitive benefits. Language, arts and music are universal and important expressions and markers of identity, both socially and culturally (Stokes, 1994; Söderman, 2007; 2010; Karlsen & Westerlund, 2010; Burnard, 2011). These perspectives of positioning in the interview setting, where gender, class and cultural imprints impact the way people talk and present themselves, are central to the use of reflexive analysis strategies in qualitative research. Pillow (2010) invites us to interrupt these common practices and engage with new culturally reflexive and ethical tools for researcher reflexivity: for collecting data, equalising the research relationships, for doing data collection 'with' instead of 'on', and for

practices that lead to ‘multi-vocal’ texts and the exploration of differing writing and representation styles.

Ethical considerations in data collection

Power should be made visible in the interview context, which means that the researcher has to relate and reflect upon it, and engage in a critique beyond ‘a certain kind of paralyzed reflexivity’ (Pillow, 2010:277), particularly with regard to the analysis of collected data (Hofvander Trulsson, 2010a; Burnard, 2011). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) highlight the power asymmetry of the research interview and state that it is often overlooked by the researcher who might put too much focus on the open understanding of the data and the close personal interaction between the parties. For example, informants might, more or less consciously, express what they think the interviewer wants to hear.

The researcher’s perspective generates questions like: What does the researcher bring to the field, according to culture, ethnicity, gender, religion and class, but also, and maybe most importantly, attitudes? How can researchers come into contact and get access to a marginalised group in society and how do media portrayals of minority groups affect our data collection and analysis? The key point here is that reflexivity offers an invitation to not only the readers of the research but those whose reality has been ‘captured’ to challenge the accounts offered to them, and reminds both readers and researchers alike that these accounts, as textual creations, are, at best, a co-construction which is insightful; at worst, a particular individual researcher’s interpretation.

The informant’s perspective generates questions like: How does the informant interpret the researcher? What answers does the informant assume the researcher is looking for? What picture of him- or herself does the informant want to convey to the researcher? In groups living under a higher degree of exclusion and vulnerability, a stronger “we” identity is often apparent, which should lead to researcher’s raising more questions and more reflection on the un-thought and unconscious categories of thought – that is, the unpacking of assumptions, reading deeply to uncover our own entrenched opinions, talking to a peer research group so as to ensure we cannot “fix” a project but rather uncover hegemonic preconditions of our own practices. For intercultural researchers to make their way into new cultures and new relationships, we must learn how to represent, see and understand these experiences, before we can see the questions that arise in-between cultures.

Language issues in intercultural research

The intercultural researcher’s role and job is to represent, in whatever, form, fashion or mode is appropriate, the voice of the participants. This is where the practices of reflexivity need to become more complex. Language limitations may appear in the interview and when transcribing the material. Our experience is that to understand and do justice to the informants’ statements, the processing of the interviews has been crucial. Kirsten Hastrup (1995) says “my argument starts from a discussion of categorisation as a particular reflection upon the world; the aim is to demonstrate the potential mismatch between words and the realities they name” (p, 27) in other words, in this context, translation is never a possibility in any language, and the impossibility takes on a different nature in intercultural contexts. Heléne Thomsson describes different experiences in her book “Reflexive Interviews” (2002) interviewing women with foreign backgrounds. She discusses how the informant’s language limitations can overshadow an entire conversation and how the researcher's position can limit

the interview. Several aspects of power relationships can affect what is said in the interview; for example the researcher might use a more academic language than some informants. But the opposite could also appear. Occupational status between the parties, educational attainment and ethnicity can all affect the outcome of the interview (Hofvander Trulsson, 2010a). Thomsson also writes about the use of an interpreter, which she does not recommend, since it may constrain the interview when a third party is used to translate what is said. This third party may also have difficulties holding back his own comments on the statements. Via the interpreter there can be an undesired interpretation of what is said, because "language difficulties are so much more than translation problems" (Thomsson, 2002, p. 98). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) highlight the point that in postmodern thinking there is an approach to interviewing that focuses on the interview as a space for production of knowledge. Similiarly, Rice (2009:257) advises that 'strong reflexivity' is an imperative and best described as a form of 'embodied engagement' that fully engages the researcher in relation to others. Kohler-Riessman (2007) argues that the interviewees provide their information and interpretations, but it is the researcher that constructs the interview and makes the final interpretation. The researcher listens to what is said or not said, and how something is said, representing multiple levels of linguistic interpretation and analysis. The research interview is a conversation about the human life-world, where the oral discourse turns into text interpretation (Hofvander Trulsson, 2010a).

Insider or outsider in cultural contexts

Today, there is extensive debate about the pros and cons of researchers being "outsiders" or "insiders" in relation to the communities or the phenomena they study. Kerstetter (2012) discusses the consequences of the dichotomy of outsider/insider and emphasizes the relative nature of researchers' identities in relation to research context. She says that community-based researchers often enter communities as "outsiders," whether by virtue of their affiliation with a university, level of formal education, research expertise, race, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics. Many of these traits – such as level of formal education and access to resources – also connote a more privileged and powerful status in the larger society. Recent research has attempted to move beyond the strict outsider/insider division to underline the relative nature of researchers' identities and social positions in relation to the studied context.

Robert Merton (1972), summarized these opposing standpoints as two different doctrines and says that the outsider doctrine values researchers who are not from the communities they study, as observers and neutral. The outsider researcher is thus "valued for the objectivity, which permits the stranger to experience and treat even his close relationships as though from a bird's-eye view" (Kerstetter, 2012, p.100). The insider doctrine, on the other hand, suggests that outsider researchers will never truly understand a culture or situation if they have not experienced it. The insider further contends that "insider researchers are uniquely positioned to understand the experiences of groups of which they are members" (Kerstetter, 2012, p. 100). The degree of insider/outsider status means detailing the amount of experience, or lack thereof, with the target population. In the literature we can read an expressed dichotomy of insider/outsider, which also can be understood in the context of knowledge, like inside knowledge, that the outsider does not have. This dichotomy is further analysed and problematized in the next section.

According to Kerstetter (2012) insider researchers are able to recruit informants more easily than outsider researchers and by using their shared experiences are able to gather a richer set

of data. Outsider researchers could be accused of never truly understanding a culture or situation if they are not part of it. Insiders may be sharing experiences, like, for example growing up in similar neighbourhoods, with a child rearing ideology that creates a similar social and cultural capital or other commonality. This common habitus can be important, but there are risks in that too, like becoming blind to phenomena and discourses in the field where power relations might be internalized. The outsider is valued for objectivity and distance but might find it hard to analyse what´s behind the discourses s/he sees and hears.

Researchers in the space between

Mercer (2007) raises the notion of "the space between" and that is probably the most common situation for researchers, to fall somewhere between that of insider and outsider. There are a few researchers who have raised issues concerning "the space between". Robert Merton (1972) wrote about the insiderism among American sociologists in the 60s. He shed light on hegemonies and doxa within the research field and gave examples from the polarised conditions that pervaded American society during that time. He described how previous generations of male sociologists, mainly recruited from the white elite, defined the field and directly and indirectly divided the research areas where sociologists with Afro-American backgrounds or women could research within. He called it "patterned expectations" (Merton, 1972, p. 103), which was an appropriate selection of problems to investigate. He wrote:

> The handful of Negro sociologists were in large part expected, as a result of social selection and self-selection, to study problems of Negro life and relations between the races just as the handful of women sociologists were expected to study problems of women, principally as these related to marriage and the family. (Merton, 1972, p. 103).

This kind of "insiderism" that was developed as a result of the discriminating factors in American society seems to have led to a kind of protectionism among African Americans. One can identify a Black standpoint, linked to the theory and societal context, that only they could study the Afro-American group. Merton described it as a strong doctrine of insiderism and referred to an article written by a group of coloured intellectuals, who said, "only black ethnologists can understand black culture, only black sociologists can understand the social life of blacks..." (p.103). In the weaker form of the doctrine, some practical concessions were made in the article, and Merton summarizes the situation as being that there were too few coloured scholars at the time, and because of that it was proposed that some white professors with relevant experience might be brought into the "black programs". "Any white professors involved in the programs would have to be black in spirit in order to last" (p.104). With this example we can see the complexity within the field of research, where racial and gender aspects always play a role, not only for the informants but also the researchers involved (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Using Bourdieu's tools, this situation can be interpreted as "I know because I am one" or "I know because I've been there" and tells us that our bodyhexis is always to be taken into account in the meeting with another person with the historical layers/doxa included, no matter what role we carry. Does this also mean that insider knowledge is the most important when you investigate a phenomenon? Can only women study women, and men, men? And, in intercultural research, can only a researcher with similar experiences (i.e. war experiences, refugeeism or poverty) view and describe similar circumstances? The values that the categorization might bring are results of norms in the culture, the historical experiences and political and media discourses.

The impact of discriminating aspects in intercultural arts research

The variety of ways in which discrimination, oppression and violent acts have been played out in history also shows how contextual they are; they strike both up and down in the society´s hierarchies, where almost anyone can become a target: Jews, Roma, indigenous groups, immigrants, homosexuals, women, etc. Bourdieu (2004) highlights the importance of the interviewer to be not only neutral, but to actively follow up the interviewees' statements and responses. These types of interviewers do not strive to be the "objective" scientists, but participate in the conversation by asking and questioning. Throughout history, though, there are also many examples of scientists and researchers that have experimented with groups of people in a most unethical way. The objective role has given them a much too distanced position in relation to the studied object; the lack of empathy has had far-reaching consequences for the individual's life. Randy Moore (2002) writes about the complex interactions between science, governmental policies and ethics and gives a rich background to Nazi acts and how science interacted with and legitimated them. Examples of unethical acts and direct and indirect violence of researchers can be found in Nazi science, tobacco research and measuring the skulls of Indigenous peoples to determine their intellectual capacity; an infamous example is the Tuskegee syphilis experiment in Alabama.

James A Banks (1998) writes about his experiences at a university in the US in the 1960s, which subsequently became a catalyst for research questions he continues to study. One question that he examines in the article *The lives and Values of researchers: Implications for Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society*, is "why were the slaves pictured happy?" (p. 4). As a young student he was astonished at how slavery was described in the course literature. His examples give a retrospective reflection of how researchers, who historically mainly had a background in the upper classes, in many cases showed a lack of respect and compassion for the people and the environments they studied. Banks gives a few examples where researchers showed a problematic stand in their analysis:

> Philips identified with slave owners rather than with the people who were enslaved…(1918)
> Murray views welfare mothers as burdens on the nation… (1984)
> (from Banks, 1998. p. 5)

In the above cases, researchers were outsiders in relation to the communities they studied. They described cultures and peoples of whom they had little insider knowledge and for whom they had little respect or compassion. Banks points at the key challenge in research analysis and refers back to the authors of "the happy slave" myth; he asks: "Whose values and beliefs do they reflect?" (Banks, 1998, p.4). Banks refers to Merton (1972) and describes the epistemological crisis during the 1960s and 1970s, which was characterized by heated discussion and debates of questions such as: Who should speak for whom? Who speaks with moral authority and legitimacy? "Can the outsider ever understand the cultures and experiences of insiders or speak with moral authority about them?" (Banks, 1998. p.6). Merton writes "Either the insider or the outsider has access to sociological truth" (Merton, 1972 p. 40) and concludes that both insider and outsider perspectives are needed in the process of truth seeking.

Cultures in-between and norms in society

In the late 1990s, a more nuanced version of insider/outsider doctrine was discussed: the "space between", which usually is characterized as a multidimensional space, where researchers' identities, cultural backgrounds and relationships to research participants influence how they are positioned within that space. In Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay´s book *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Homi K Bhabha (1996) writes about the "Cultures In-Between". He problematizes what "in between" means in a minority and racial context and how different generations' handle a migration process, and the relationships, bonds and sympathies that are developed because of that. The capitals, like cultural (access to education), social (religious, political, cultural) and economical (financial, ownership) have changed in nature with the process of migration. This leads, according to Bhabha, to a situation described as *cultures in-between*, which he also names as "cultural hybridisation" (p. 54). Bhabha (2005) expresses himself as follows about multiculturalism and being in a minority situation:

> ... On the one hand, multiculturalism actually is prevented in practice, although it is always recognized and affirmed in theory. There arises a natural norm, established and directed by the host society or the dominant culture, where the argument seems to be, that other cultures are good, but we must adapt them to our own terms. The second problem concerns the well-known phenotype that in societies where multiculturalism exists, still different forms of racism are common. The reason is that the universalism, which paradoxically allows ethnocentrism, in itself, conceals ethnocentric norms, values and interests. (Bhabha, 2005, p. 284-285)

The quote shows how host societies more or less require minority groups to adopt their norms. This could be interpreted as the majority society's citizens assessing life and the world from their own position and experience.

The third identity

The concept of the "third identity" is developed by Katrin Goldstein-Kyaga & Maria Borgström (2009), who describe the identities of globalization's footsteps as cross-border, multi-dimensional, contextual and changeable in different situations. They emphasize that the identity is diverse and multi-dimensional since the context in which people live also affects them. Goldstein-Kyaga & Borgström (2009) have studied young people in multicultural areas in Sweden, and they believe that these urban spaces, dominated by several different nationalities, provide encounters between different minority cultures. The individual is, however, characterized by more than the present context of living, but also by the majority culture which affects the environment in terms of laws, rules and structures in the school and community. This multi-cultural mix of cultures and nationalities that children grow up and develop in is something they call *the third identity*, which can be understood as an identity-melting-pot of many different cultural contexts, navigating in contextual behavioural patterns. The concept of the third identity is inspired by Bhabha's (1994) theories and described as an "in between-place" or "third place". Goldstein-Kyaga & Borgström (2009) argue that the concept of ethnicity has become too narrow to describe the situation in which people find themselves in a globalized society. Today's society, in general, and especially in big cities, is characterized by flowing, changing boundaries, where people's identity cannot be described in terms of belonging to individual and distinct groups.

There are, and maybe, to some extent, always have been parallel movements in societies, where ideologies and lifestyles collide with political or religious stands. Considering traditional perspectives together with detraditionalising we want to highlight that people can be on different levels of one or the other. These perspectives are reflected in children in school environments and in leisure time activities. Recruitment for music schools and access to instruments, educational choices, and opportunities to get around in society interact with many different perspectives related to the background, experience, parents and relatives, teachers, recreation and other children. These opportunities and influences interact with and influence individuals at many different stages in their lives (Burnard, 2011).

The space between in Indigenous settings

Hybridity is a concept that has been used (in post-structural and post-modern analysis and especially in post-colonial theory) by theorists like Stuart Hall, Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak. The concept has its origin in the 20th century where it described a biological categorisation of different species and plants. In the middle of the 20th century, this led to divisive discussions about race, and categorisations of race. People, who had a mixed race, could be categorised as "hybrid" (Brömssen, 2006).

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) highlights another angle of hybridity, with the concept of "the space between", describing her own experience occupying the "space between" as a Maori researcher in New Zealand:

> I was an insider as a Maori mother and an advocate of the language revitalization movement, and I shared in the activities of fund raising and organizing. Through my different tribal relationships I had close links to some of the mothers and to the woman who was the main organizer...When I began the discussions and negotiations over my research, however, I became much more aware of the things which made me an outsider. I was attending university as a graduate student; I had worked for several years as a teacher and had a professional income; I had a husband; and we owned a car, which was second-hand but actually registered. As I became more involved in the project...these differences became much more marked. (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999. p. 137–8)

Tuhiwai Smith (1999) illustrates the multidimensionality of the "space between," drawing on her ethnicity, community work, education and income, to problematize her position as a complete insider in relationship to her research participants. She points out that her identity as a researcher led the women she interviewed to treat her differently than they might otherwise have done if she were visiting their house as a mother. Her role as researcher put her in a new position too. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) noted how the women's practices – cleaning their homes, preparing food, etc. were performed not only as signs of respect but also as strategies "to keep the outsider at bay, to prevent the outsider becoming the intruder" (p. 138). Her identity as a researcher clearly outweighed other identities and relationships she shared with her research participants. However, this "outsider" status was also probably mediated by her ethnicity and shared experiences, allowing her access to a community that might not otherwise have been available to a researcher who did not share those characteristics.

Ethical and intersectional considerations in data collection

In every research study, the initial decisions have far-reaching consequences. These initial considerations draw the lines for what kind of analysis and interpretation one can do. Every design is also related to ethical issues, which need to be recognised. When categorising informants, intersectionality becomes important in order to challenge our pre-understanding of the context we're studying.

The risk of grouping people, such as parents with a foreign background, individuals with a working class background, coloured women, white men and so on, is that it simplifies the study by presupposing that people in a group are similar and homogeneous in their lifestyles or in their professional lives (Hofvander Trulsson, Burnard, Söderman, 2015). Intersectionality holds that the classical conceptualizations of oppression within society, such as racism, sexism, homophobia, and religion- or belief-based bigotry, do not act independently of one another; instead, these forms of oppression interrelate, creating a system of oppression that reflects the "intersection" of multiple forms of discrimination. Cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society (Collins, 2000; McCall, 2005).

The global rise in migration also increases cultural exposure and emphasises the need for analytical and methodological tools to investigate the areas where social diversity rubs against and challenges our prejudices. There are a multitude of attitudes about diversity, which have implications in every decision we make throughout the research process, from design, to the choice of theory and analysis of data. Another ethical question is how we handle provoking quotes from our informants? Quotes that could be misused by journalists or media, quotes that for example could reinforce prejudices and stereotypes of religious contexts? If we choose to publish these provoking quotes, the soil we plant them in becomes very important. Prejudices against immigrants and indigenous groups are difficult to change and because of that, we, as researchers, have a central reasonability to analyse possible outcomes before we publish.

Interview studies in qualitative research require sociological sense and gaze. Bourdieu (1984, 1996) calls this reflexive reflexivity, which can be interpreted as deep knowledge about the topic and the phenomenon under study. The sociological gaze enables us to perceive and monitor where the interview actually takes place and pay attention to the impact of the social structure. Bourdieu's (1979) view of reflexivity and reflection means that the researcher is perceived as inserted in a social field with specific power relations. These in turn generate a certain habitus, which results in patterns of behaviour among the participants, both informants and researchers. The foundation of reflective empirical research consists of a reconstruction of social reality, where the researcher interacts with the researched by their presence (Hofvander Trulsson, 2015). There is also a process surrounding the positions of being an "insider" or an "outsider". A researcher can go from being an outsider in relation to the examined context, to becoming an insider. This process determines the conditions for all participants.

Intercultural arts research is a most heterogeneous field with few limits in terms of research topics, angles and questions. Intercultural arts research acknowledges the complexity of locations and identities in a global world, as well as the desire to create dialogue and understanding across cultures. This chapter has tried to map how concepts of insider, outsider and the space between hang together and work in empirical contexts. For the researcher the

challenge of intercultural research (an interpersonal meeting which also involves a meeting of self) is not simply the need for a methodological tool for equalising and making visible power relations and practices of gathering data as 'truths', but rather a reflexive tool which can work to counter comfortable research practices: researching within discomfort zones is key.

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